DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 049 129 SO 000 936

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TITLE Teaching Anthropological Processes and Perspectives in the Secondary School.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Anthropology, *Black Community, *Community Study, *Cross Cultural Studies, Experimental Curriculum, Folk Culture, Grade 12, Inductive Methods, *Inquiry Training, Learning Activities, Negro Culture, Secondary Grades, Social Problems, Social Studies, Urban Culture

ABSTRACT

The subject of this paper is a black twelfth grade experimental class in the Problems of American Democracy conducted in the fall of the 1969 school year. They were concerned with studying the local black community in its past and present forms from a cross-cultural anthropological point of view. A conceptual scheme of natural history involved the student as an active participant in the learning process. Another pedagogical assumption was that all knowledge is tentative with the subject matter treated as data and as people's perceptions of the world. The students performed as anthropological field workers with the central foci of the learning activities on collection (observing, interviewing, and recording), organization, classification, and the analysis of data on: family, housing and household activities, male and female roles, food traditions, religion, folk traditions, and the economic systems of farming, money, and goods. Data was presented about other cultures to encourage students to analyze differences in values, behavior patterns, and social groupings. Important subsidiary class activities were: 1) discussion of books read, and student report presentations; 2) lecture; and, 3) class discussions on current topics such as drugs, contraception, black pride, and the anti-war movement. The processes and perspectives can be adapted to any grade level and are applicable in a wide variety of subject fields. (SBE)

ED049129

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TEACHING ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL

SO 000 936

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Introduction

The discipline of anthropology is more than a body of knowledge which is revised and expanded from time to time by scholars in that field. It is also a way of dealing with process from a set of perspectives which provides a framework for analyzing and interpreting experiences. In this sense anthropology has a great deal to offer secondary education, especially in the development of curriculum and in the formulation of improved teaching strategies. Anthropological methods of inquiry are fundamentally empirical and inductive; their use requires the development of skills in observing events and in recording and classifying data. Moreover, the use of these methods fosters the development of comparative and cross-cultural perspectives because the foci of inquiry are the sequence of events and the processes of change over time as they occur within, among, and across human groupings. The secondary educator can use anthropological theory and methodology to develop learning activities designed to assist the students in acquiring the skills and outlooks necessary for them to begin to observe, order, and interpret the complex and changing world in which they live. Anthropological perspectives and processes can help the adolescent gain a deeper understanding of his socio-cultural environment and of himself as a member of his culture. They can assist him in defining his own place in

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[1]The author is indebted to Dr. Solon T. Kimball, graduate research professor of anthropology, University of Florida, for helpful suggestions on the content and organization of this article.

time and space by helping him understand the social groupings to which he belongs in relation to other such groups existing now and in the past.

The subject of this paper is the activities, subject matter, and techniques of an experimental "problems of American democracy" class in which the development of anthropological skills and comparative, cross-cultural perspectives were among the primary goals.

The Experimental Class

The experimental class was part of Carver[2] High School, an all black school in north central Florida. The major participants in the class included twenty-four twelfth grade pupils, fourteen females and nine males. Mr. Walter Riley, a black male and an experienced educator, served as the teacher of the experimental group from the beginning of the school year until the end of December when he resigned his position at Carver High to take a job at the local junior college. Mr. Joseph Simmons, a young black man in his first year of teaching, replaced Mr. Riley and remained with the class until it was terminated about three weeks after his arrival. The author, a white female, and at that time, a doctoral student at the University of Florida, functioned as a participant-observer in the class.[3] Dr. Samuel Kline, a white male anthropology professor at the university and the author's advisor on her doctoral dissertation, acted in a consulting capacity to the class and its teachers.

The experimental class was in operation during the first half of the

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[2]All names of persons and places in this paper are pseudonyms, except the name of the state.

[3]The author used the data she collected on the experimental class as the bases for her doctoral dissertation, An Anthropological Study of the Internal Structure of an Experimental "Problems of Democracy" Class in an all Black High School.

school year, 1969-70. Originally the plans were to continue the class until June, 1970. However, because of the desegregation of the local schools and the simultaneous closing of Carver High School, the class was terminated at the end of January, 1970.

The class was concerned with studying the local black community in its past and present forms from a comparative point of view. The students performed as anthropological field workers in conducting the community study; data were collected by observing, interviewing, and recording. They were then systemized and reported to the class. Comparative information about other cultures which related to data collected by the pupils was supplied in talks by Dr. Kline and, less frequently, through films, books, and talks by the pupils.

Pedagogical Assumptions

The experimental class was conducted within the framework of certain basic assumptions regarding pedagogy and its relationship to the theories and processes of applied anthropology. The key to the pedagogical assumptions underlying the activities and subject matter of the class is the method of natural history. This conceptual scheme involves the student as an active participant in the learning process; he becomes an agent who gathers, synthesizes, and analyzes "live" information. Learning is not seen as a mere passive absorption of predetermined subject matter, but as a process in which the learner is in dynamic interaction with his environment. The goal of learning is not the acquisition of facts and information as an end in itself. Rather, it is intended that the students become skilled in some of the processes by which information can be collected and ordered into new understandings. The most important of these skills is careful and

painstaking observation and recording.

Within the method of natural history there is no separation between accumulation of knowledge and its utilization in attempting to understand the meaning of life.[4] Certain skills are transmitted so that the pupil can accumulate new information and learn to go beyond these data into comparative analysis through dealing with knowledge of his own life and times in relation to the past and other life styles. This means that the pupil is required to look at the phenomena of his own life as "the outcome of a process in which many systemically intertwined factors are operating."[5] He must attempt to construct his own narrative of history through examining the interrelationships of events in the past and present and investigating the meaning of the changes which have occurred over time.

The preceding discussion implies that another pedagogical assumption guiding the operation of the experimental class was that all knowledge is tentative and that the subject matter of schooling should reflect this characteristic. Subject matter should be treated as data and as people's perceptions of the world rather than as absolute reality or immutable truth. The central foci of the learning activities are collection, organization, classification, and analysis of data by pupils, not "Truth" being transmitted by the teacher. Thus, the emphasis is on process and this requires the pupil to reconstruct his major hypotheses or assumptions when the information he collects and arranges casts serious doubts on their validity.

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[4]Solon T. Kimball, "The Method of Natural History and the Social Studies," Social Education, Vol. XXXII, Feb., 1968, p. 124.

[5]Solon T. Kimball and James E. McClellan, Education and the New America, (New York: Random House), 1962, p. 300.

It was hoped that by utilizing the techniques and methods described above that the students in the experimental class would begin to develop a sense of history rather than merely mastering certain facts about it. It was assumed that history would become more relevant to the students as they validated it through the history of their own families and community; that it would become more meaningful as they saw the relationship of their parents and grandparents to events in the past. In addition, the activities involving a study of family and community history were based on the belief that it is important that the history of ordinary people be recorded, and that one way to preserve this rich folk history is to train people in observation and recording.

Finally, it was assumed that the natural history method could be successfully employed by the students to study their own community. Since each student was connected to the community through various ties it was believed that he could study this social system in an effective and productive manner by collecting data which portrayed it in both its present and past forms. It should be said at this point, however, that it was not assumed these students were in any way a representative sample of the entire black community. Since the class included some of the most academically able students in the senior class and in view of the fact that all members were in the last year of high school, it was recognized that this was a rather select group.

Activities, Subject Matter and Techniques

The remainder of this paper is devoted to a description of the specific means by which the pedagogical assumptions underlying the experimental class were implemented. This description includes an account of how certain

activities, subject matter, and techniques were used to foster the development of comparative cross-cultural perspectives and skills in anthropological methods of inquiry and analysis.

It has been noted earlier that the activities of the class centered around the study of the basic institutions and cultural patterns of the local black community. This investigation was conducted from a comparative point of view. Data about other cultures were utilized for purposes of comparing and contrasting other ways of life with that of the local community. In addition, local life of two or three generations ago was compared with present day living.

It should be recalled that the information concerning the local community in both its past and present forms was collected by the students through the techniques of observation, interviewing, and recording, and reported to the class orally and sometimes in writing. Information about other cultural groups was supplied by Dr. Kline and, less frequently, by the students, through films, and written materials.

Categories of Activities

Most of the class activities fell within three major categories. One of these groupings included all presentation and discussion of data collected by the students in their various research tasks. Secondly, on some occasions information was presented by the instructors for the purposes of clarifying the nature and purposes of the research tasks, facilitating their completion, and providing comparative data which fit in with the other activities. Finally, several class meetings were devoted to general class discussions on topics of current interest.

Those activities involving research and reporting on the part of the

students were central to the organization of the class. These assignments involved investigating the changes over time in the life style and major problems of the local community. The family and church as important institutions in the black culture were looked at in some detail. In addition, eight books, which related to the other research topics, were reported on by some of the students at different points in time over the term. In most cases Mr. Riley, and for a short time, Mr. Simmons, was in charge of these activities. Generally, the teacher initiated the activity by asking for a volunteer to begin making his report. After the activity commenced, its direction and the order of speaking was determined mainly by the pupils. When the activity lagged, however, Mr. Riley or Mr. Simmons would ask questions or make comments to stimulate student talk, or they would ask that someone else volunteer to make a presentation. Moreover, if an interesting point was raised in a pupil's report which the other students did not comment about, the teacher sometimes responded to it or asked the group to express their opinions about it. Finally, at the end of a reporting activity Mr. Riley or Mr. Simmons often asked the class to summarize what had been said and to compare and contrast various aspects of the topic under consideration.

The function of providing information was mainly that of Dr. Kline. His talks, generally lasting from fifteen to forty minutes, were given only in connection with a research project which involved participation on the part of the student. The information was not regarded as an end in itself or something which might be of use in the distant future, but was viewed as a means to carry out immediate activities.

A majority of these lectures dealt with three basic, but varying themes. In the first place, a number of them supplied comparative material

about other cultural groups. The specific content of such talks depended upon which aspect of the community--food, shelter, religion, roles in the family, and so forth--was being considered by the class at that time. Secondly, many of the talks brought out helpful points on how to go about gathering data through observing and interviewing. Finally, some of the presentations provided feedback on the progress of the class.

General class discussions occurred at several points in time over the term. These activities are to be distinguished from the discussions which arose out of reporting activities, since the general class discussions were initiated independently of the research tasks. These discussions served mainly to provide a means to use constructively some of the class periods between the time major research tasks were planned and the students were ready to present their findings; in many cases, therefore, they do not relate directly to the central foci and purposes of the class and are referred to only briefly. Most frequently they dealt with various aspects of the problems existing between the black and white races. Other topics of discussion included drugs, contraception, and the anti-war movement.

Sequence of Activities

This section is concerned with a presentation of the class activities as they occurred over time. This treatment of the sequence of events is not a precise day by day account, but is a more general summary of the approximate order of activities.

The first research projects were designed to help the students become proficient in gathering data through observation, interviewing, and recording, and to provide a broad picture of the differences in community life and problems between the present and the recent past. These activities also engaged the pupils in a comparative study of the customary behavior patterns and

social groupings of their own community and those of other cultures. During the first nine week grading period, the class completed three major research tasks.

The first research work done by the students were concerned with the changes over time in the eating practices of the community. The pupils reported their observations of their families' current practices with regard to food and followed this up a few days later with a comparison of the eating habits and related behavior during the period in time when their parents and grandparents were growing up. The latter information was obtained through interviews.

Significant changes in food traditions were brought out and discussed when the pupils reported their data. Several students reported that wild game, including squirrel, rabbit, and racoon, were often a regular part of the diet of families in the past. Others reported that lunches were taken to school in a bucket and consisted of edibles generally left over from the evening meal the night before. Other significant practices mentioned in the presentation that no longer exist include the use of smokehouses, pantries, and ice boxes to store food.

The data were compiled and reported in such a way that food practices were placed in the context of a particular socio-economic system which existed in the black community in the recent past. The basic element of this system was the small independent or tenant farm family in which food and most other goods were produced at home. Barter was a common practice among the black farm families, and cash money for such "luxuries" as every-day shoes was not readily available.

Since a question asked in the interview was concerned with what kinds of lunches were brought to school during the adults' youth, food traditions

and economic practices were seen in relation to educational problems and practices. The reports revealed that one room schools were common and that transportation to and from school was seldom available. School terms were shorter and grade levels fewer in number than at the present, partly because of the economic needs of the family which required the youths to work in the fields for part of the year.

Thus, it can be seen that the result of the first series of reports was a definite beginning in the attempt to make explicit the changes which have occurred in the black community over the past several decades. As the students began to analyze the data each of them had gathered, the outlines of a rural, folk tradition began to emerge in contrast to the more urban life of the students in the class.

Prior to the reports on current food practices, Dr. Kline gave a brief talk on the food traditions in different cultural groups. Additional cross-cultural material was introduced to the students between the reports on contemporary food habits and those of the past; Dr. Kline compared the eating customs and related behaviors of the local black community as reported by the students with those of the Irish countryman. Within this context some instruction was given on how to observe, interview, and record as Dr. Kline reported how he went about gathering data when engaging in anthropological field research in Ireland.

Two other activities were engaged in between the time the students reported their own food habits and gave the presentations on those practices in the past. Mr. Riley led a discussion dealing with some recently occurring local incidents which involved racial conflicts. The other activity was a listing by the students of the problems encountered by them in writing their life histories, an assignment completed the first week as a preliminary to

major research endeavors. The purpose of listing the problems was to bring to light some of the difficulties which are inherent in assembling, classifying, and reporting the detailed, empirical data gathered in observation and interviews.

The second major research project had to do with housing and family activities around the home. Data were collected by the students in two areas. First, they were asked to draw two diagrams complete with keys. One was a map of the kitchen in their home, and the other portrayed their grandparents' kitchen some years ago. Secondly, the class members observed family activities over a weekend paying special attention to distinctions based upon age and sex.

The diagrams of the modern kitchens were constructed through direct observation. These drawings were brought to class and compared by the students in small groups after which two students drew their diagrams on the board and described them. The same activity was repeated a week later, but this time the students compared the modern kitchens with the older ones. The old fashioned kitchens were drawn from data gathered in interviews with older people.

Prior to the completion of the above assignment, Dr. Kline presented cross-cultural data and other information. A short talk was given on the housing arrangements of rural Ireland and the patterns of family activity in this culture. Spatial arrangements of objects and people within the home including the kitchen were described so that the pupils could compare these arrangments with the data they had collected about housing in the local community. Distinctions based upon age and sex within the Irish family and the cyclical nature of its activities were also emphasized. Finally, more information was given concerning observation and interviewing.

At the same time the class was introduced to six books. Six students read all or a part of them and reported to the group what the books were about and whether or not they were relevant for the purposes of the experimental class. The books reported on were Plainville, USA by James West, Perspectives From Anthropology by Rachel R. Sady, The Irish Countryman by Conrad Arensberg, Five Families by Oscar Lewis, Mirror for Man by Clyde Kluckhohn, and Realities of the Urban Classroom by G. Alexander Moore.

These books provided examples of the use of anthropological processes and perspectives the students were supposed to be learning through their research activities. They illustrated careful observation, recording, and analysis of data within the method of natural history; it was shown how the authors ordered their data into new understandings and insights as they examined the sequence of events and the processes occurring over time and in space within various human groupings. In addition, all of the books provided cross-cultural contrasts and comparisons. Finally, some of these works included the folk history and traditions of ordinary people which were preserved only because the authors had carefully recorded them.

Observation of family routines over a weekend was the final part of the second major research assignment. This task was done within a comparative, cross-cultural framework since Dr. Kline had already discussed patterns of family activity among the Irish countrymen. After the students reported their data, Mr. Riley asked them to hold a discussion in which differences and similarities in behavior patterns among the families represented by the class were identified and analyzed. One of the most important topics which arose in this discussion was the distinction in household activities based upon sex and the appropriate role and activities of males and females in the family. This activity was followed up the next day in a short talk by Dr.

Kline in which he extended the comparative analysis to include other communities. He discussed distinctions between the activities of males and females and the problem of the relationships between the sexes within various cultural settings. He pointed out that this was a problem which, although dealt with in many ways, existed in all cultures.

The final research project of the first nine weeks involved looking at what the students saw as the major problems in present day living and how they saw them as compared with the parents and grandparents in their youth. This project was initiated by having each student bring to class a list of what he thought were the most important problems in contemporary American society. Mr. Riley combined all of these lists into a master list of more than sixty problems which was mimeographed and given to all of the personnel of the class. The next step in this research project was to have each student take this master list and develop his own classification system in which he would again establish priorities with respect to the problems he saw as being most important. Each student reported his taxonomy to the class. This report generally included an explanation of the criteria used to develop the student's system of classification.

Following these reports, two of the classification systems were placed on the board and used as the basis for a talk by Dr. Kline. The process of classifying empirical data into categories in order to gain new insights and understandings, an operation crucial to the method of natural history, was made explicit to the pupils. This is a process in which they had been engaged during all of the research activities, but until this time it had been an implicit part of the task.

After talking about taxonomy, Dr. Kline wrote the five major problems of American democracy as seen by the students on the board and asked the class

to rank them. In the context of this activity the idea was expressed by a student that what is defined as a problem depends upon the perspective of the people who are viewing the situation. One example was given of how their parents and grandparents viewed the question of race in their youth as compared with how the students in the class saw the problem. This discussion provided a convenient situation in which to move into the next major phase of this research project which involved interviewing a parent or grandparent on the topic of the three major problems they faced when they were growing up.

The data gathered in these interviews added substance to the information brought out in the first series of interviews and were rich in information which provided a basis by which to contrast the past and the present. The life of the sharecropper and the independent small farmer was described in greater detail. It became apparent that in this period problems of an economic nature tended to permeate all aspects of existence. It was seen that there were few luxuries to be had and that, because children were an economic asset on the farm, very large families were predominant. The relationship between economic difficulties and securing the basic rudiments of an education were explored more deeply. The relative educational backwardness of the rural South in the first three or four decades of the 20th century was clearly documented. The changing nature of the relationships between blacks and whites and the attitudes toward these relationships were fully discussed. The changes in the relationships between parents and children were looked at; it was seen that although the character of the "generation gap" had changed, it had also existed as a problem in other generations. Changes in the nature of social activities and religious life and the relationship between these two were made explicit. Other contrasts brought out included

such things as changing health and medical beliefs and practices, and changes in national banking policies.

During the period in which the above mentioned activity was taking place time was taken out to consider an event which occurred locally. This event was the homecoming parade at the University of Florida. Some of the pupils at the suggestion of the teachers observed this parade and reported on it to the class. This optional assignment provided another opportunity to acquire skills in gathering and organizing data through practice in careful and painstaking observation, recording, and classifying of events.

The reports concerning the problems of an older generation were completed near the end of the first nine week grading period. This project along with those on food, and housing and family activities in the home, provided the means through which the students gained the skills necessary to deal with process from an anthropological perspective; the operations of observing, recording, categorizing, and analyzing empirical data were stressed. These projects introduced the students to a method of learning in which they were active participants involved in "creating" history, rather than being passive recipients of predetermined, static historical facts passed out by the teacher. The students became involved in examining the meaning of change over time within a comparative, cross-cultural framework in which no pat answers were provided. Such activities helped underscore the tentative nature of knowledge in a complex and changing world. Subject matter became data rather than "Truth" as the students discovered how ways of viewing and solving universal human problems vary greatly across human groupings in time and space. Finally, these three initial projects brought to light many folk traditions such as home remedies for sickness and eating wild game which are rapidly disappearing as the local community adopts an increasingly more

urban outlook.

Two activities occurring after the reports on problems of the past brought the first nine week grading period to a close. The first was a redefinition of the nature and purposes of the class. The second involved a final outside assignment which was to be presented in written form only.

The redefinition of the goals and purposes of the class was in part a direct response to the expressed concern of a class member, conveyed in an interview conducted by the author. This student informed her that some students were concerned that there were so many people sitting in on the class and writing things down. She was referring to the author, two students from the university, a student teacher, a supervisor, and possible Dr. Kline, who often engaged in note-taking when Mr. Riley had charge of the class. During this activity Mr. Riley discussed the experimental nature of the class. In addition, Dr. Kline brought out a point which had been talked about several times before; again it was made explicit that any information recorded for research purposes was considered confidential and that personal identities would not be revealed. Also, during this class period Mr. Riley asked for and received the students' advice on how he should evaluate them.

The final written assignment was given the following day. This project was a problem designed to assess the skills of the student in organizing, synthesizing, and analyzing the data reported by the class members since the beginning of the school year. The task was to write a paper which contrasted the traditional rural life the parents and grandparents had described with present day life. The points of contrast included the size, structure, activities, and relationships of the family; the facilities, depth, and nature of the school; housing facilities; sources of money and goods; religious

life and community life. It should be noted that these variables of change were not imposed on the situation by the teachers, but were inherent in the detailed information compiled by the pupils through the use of inductive, empirical techniques. This written assignment required the student to go beyond the particulars of the information into comparative analysis in which he examined the interrelationships between these variables. Thus, he was involved in writing an account of recent history by examining the changes which have occurred in his community over the past three generations.

In order to clarify this assignment, Dr. Kline gave a talk on some of the farming traditions which had been brought from Europe to the New World. He emphasized especially the traditional way of life of the Appalachian hill country. This lecture provided a guide which the students could follow in writing their papers.

Additional outside assignments were not made for a week so that the students would have ample time to work on their papers. However, in-class activities continued, with two class periods being devoted to discussions about a short questionnaire which had been developed by the Harris Poll. This questionnaire was supposed to measure "alienation" and consisted of a series of statements with which the respondent could agree or disagree. Examples of these statements are: "Other people get all of the lucky breaks," and "I do not have as good a chance to get ahead as other people." The questionnaire was answered by the students, and their percentages of agreement and disagreement were computed by the author prior to the discussions. These percentages were presented to the class so that the students could compare their responses with other groups which had been polled on a nationwide basis.

Following the completion of these discussions, the author reported to the class in summary form the results of the interviews she held with the class

members. These interviews were mainly concerned with the students' views about the nature, goals, and value of the class; their perception of their part in the class; and with getting suggestions from them as to how the class might be improved. After this feedback was presented, the students formed small groups to discuss the summary in terms of what was relevant at this point in time and to decide which suggestions, that had not already been put into effect, should be implemented. A chosen representative from each group reported the decisions to the entire class. Following these group reports, Dr. Kline explained the principle of feedback and that a primary purpose of the interviews was to get feedback from the students about the class which, when utilized, would extend some control over the class to them.

At the end of the ninth week, Mr. Riley and the class planned a new research project. The students were asked to collect data in interviews with two adults on their opinions about the recent Federal court decision which ordered an immediate end to the dual school system in the South. The reports on these interviews began the day after the class viewed two films illustrating other cultural patterns. Three major discussions were triggered by the information presented by the students in these reports. Objections were expressed to the manner in which desegregation was being put into effect locally and alternatives to the current plan were suggested. A second important discussion concerned pride in being black. Finally, there was a lengthy discussion concerning some of the problems which might arise when desegregation did occur.

A new component was introduced into the process of collecting data for this assignment in order to enhance the development of skills in interviewing. The students were asked to go outside their families for one of the interviews and talk with some one they did not know very well. These reports were also

helpful in emphasizing the point of view that subject matter should be regarded as data and as peoples' perceptions of events rather than as a set of final truths. Conflicting opinions about the court decision demonstrated how the same phenomena could have many different meanings depending upon the perspectives and attitudes of the people interpreting the situation.

The week the reports on the court decision were given was the week of homecoming at Carver High. On Thursday of that week, when it became increasingly clear that few of the students were interested in continuing the official activity, Mr. Riley suggested the class stop and look at their interest in the events of the week. He initiated a discussion by asking the students to relate what homecoming meant to them. After responding to his question, the students asked Mr. Riley to tell them what a homecoming celebration had been like when he was in school in comparison with the present. This unplanned activity was illuminating for the teachers because it provided evidence that the students were acquiring a habit of looking at phenomena comparatively and of examining the nature of change over time.

Once the homecoming activities were over, time was taken to reassess the progress of the class and to plan new research projects and other activities for the future. The major focus of the class activities from this point in time until the class ended was a study of the religious institutions of the black community. The class made plans to engage in a research project which involved observing and recording two church services. This project, as the ones preceding it, focused on the student as an active agent gathering and interpreting original data as he interacts in an environmental context. And it introduced the student to a more complex research setting, thus serving the purpose to refine skills in observation and recording.

In addition to the church observations, the students were asked to read

certain chapters in Plainville, USA. Several copies of this book and The Irish Countryman were ordered after being recommended by the students. The chapters read in Plainville, USA dealt with, among other things, the religious beliefs and practices in that community. Hence, the material served the purpose of providing cross-cultural contrasts. Finally, the class planned to observe and record family activities occurring on Thanksgiving Day in order to gain additional experience in gathering data.

After these new activities were planned, several related talks were given by Dr. Kline. Additional information on how to go about observing and recording was presented with a special emphasis on the church observations. Examples of careful observation and recording of various religious services were presented to the students. The information was valuable both as an aid in research and for comparative purposes. For example, one observation report dealt with a Quaker meeting. In addition, contrasts in life styles were discussed in which use was made of the illustrative material in Plainville, USA. This concept was related to differences in religious behavior, forms of human groupings, communication networks, eating habits, and other practices which had been or were being studied by the class in the local community.

Another activity which occurred during this period was a book report by a student. The book discussed was Tally's Corner by Elliot Liebow. The content of the report related to the concept of contrasting life styles. The point was also brought out that this book is an especially good example of careful collection and interpretation of data within the method of natural history.

After the series of talks by Dr. Kline, some additional time was spent in getting the students ready for the complex activity of compiling research on the church. Mr. Riley suggested that it might be helpful to interview

important people in the church and pointed out some specific information which should be included in the reports in addition to the order of action in the services. These other areas included the history and functions of special roles in the church, the role of women in the overall pattern, and the origin and existence of any special arrangments of the physical setting or seating patterns. Mr. Riley initiated a discussion about one important special role in the black church, that of "Mother of the Church." The historical background, functions, duties, qualifications, and influences of this position in the different churches were brought out by the students.

These new areas for investigation extended the church project to cover a comparative examination of the recent history of the religious institutions in the black community. The changes over the past few decades within the various churches were studied within the context of other changes in the family, economic practices, and social life of the community which had been reported and analyzed earlier. The students were engaged in inquiring into the meaning of the of the changes through investigating the interrelationships of practices and institutions as they were and are. In the discussion of the special position of "Mother of the Church," for instance, the students discussed in some detail how the social life of the community centered primarily around the church when the "Mothers" were growing up; whereas today, young people, with greater economic affluence, have more choices in the ways they spend leisure time. It was hypothesized that extensive early experience with the church as one of the central foci of their lives was one reason why the "Mothers" were more devoted to the church than the young people.

In order to avoid unnecessary difficulties the students prepared and presented reports in which they made explicit the methods and procedures for

obtaining and compiling information they had developed, and brought up any problems they were having in doing the research tasks. These presentations included basic rules for careful observation and successful interviewing that the students had conceptualized and classified. For example, several students told how they went about creating conditions so their interviewees would feel comfortable and relaxed in order to obtain the kind of detailed, personal information the pupils needed for the various research projects. Some of the problems mentioned were shyness in interviewing strange people and the difficulites involved in trying to record the many details needed in an accurate observation of a social situation. The day these reports were completed was the last day of school for approximately three weeks because of a school-wide student walkout protesting the plans of local school officials to close Carver High School when the local educational system was desegregated; the walkout lasted from Tuesday, November, 25 through Thursday, December 11 and thus, included the Thanksgiving holidays.

The day the students returned to school an assignment was given by Mr. Riley concerning the walkout. This task included several questions dealing with the nature, purposes, and sequence of activities as observed by the students. Questions were also posed about the reactions of different groups to the walkout. This assignment provided additional opportunities to analyze the interrelationships among events as they occurred over time and in space. Moreover, the work required in this project involved practice in ordering information into broader concepts and new insights. Finally, attention was focused on the variety of meanings the same phenomena have to different people depending upon their perceptions and outlooks. The pupils had to consider the way in which such radically different groups as activist student organizations from the university and school officials saw the walkout.

At this point in time the students were working on three research projects, none of which had begun to be reported in class. Since only five days remained until the beginning of the Christmas vacation and the students were under a great deal of pressure from other teachers to make up work which had been missed, only the Thanksgiving reports and a few church observation reports were completed before Christmas.

An additional assignment was given at the last class meeting before Christmas vacation. This assignment included two parts. First the students were asked to observe their families' activities on Christmas Day. Secondly, they were asked to interview a grandparent or another adult for comparative data on the celebration of Christmas in the past.

Mr. Riley did not return to school after the Christmas holidays. Reporting activities began again when Mr. Simmons took over the class on the third day of school after the end of the vacation period. Prior to this Dr. Kline and the students made plans for the students to put together a notebook of all major research tasks of the term for a final written assignment.

The first reports to be given were those concerning Christmas traditions of the past and present. These reports added a new dimension to the comparative study of the local community. The information gathered by the pupils enabled them to examine changes over time in the patterns of folk behavior related to the holiday festivities. After the reports were finished the group summarized the nature of the celebration of Christmas in the past and present. As in reports given previously, many of the contrasts between the past and the present were found to be part of the broader changes in community life which are connected to a progressive shift from a rural to an urban life style. Although family gatherings persist as part of the Christmas

tradition in the present, the character of these gatherings were found to be changed by the technological complexities of an urban civilization. Automobiles now bring relatives together from a much greater distance. Instead of going hunting on Christmas Day, the men in the family often watch athletic contests on television. Similarly, the practice of exchanging gifts and the kinds of Christmas decorations used in the home have been affected by the commercialization of consumer goods and the accompanying practice of advertising. For example, artificial Christmas trees and ornaments are often purchased at a store rather than being secured or produced directly by the family.

After the students analyzed the changes over time in the celebration of Christmas in the local community, Dr. Kline furnished some cross-cultural data about Christmas traditions. He spoke about the patterns of behavior in his family when he was a youth growing up in the mid-west and about holiday festivities in some European countries.

The Christmas reports were followed by a resumption of the comparative study of religious institutions in the black community. The church observation reports revealed careful and detailed observation and recording on the part of many students; it was obvious that these skills had improved greatly since the beginning of the year. The orderly and recurrent nature of church services, the ceremonial aspects of religious exercises, the nature and functions of specialists in the church, the use of time, distribution in space and distinctions in activities based upon age and sex, and procedures for incorporating new members into the church were brought out clearly. Many patterns of folk behavior in specific black churches were reported. For example, terms such as "Amen Corner," a special section of the church where men sit who respond verbally to some of the minister's sermon, and

"mourning bench," a specific pew where one goes if he wishes the minister to pray for him, were explained. Other illustrations of folk traditions reported were speaking to the deity in "unknown tongues," the white dress of the "Mothers of the Church," the use of tamborines, guitars, and drums in the church service, and eating the mid-day meal on the church grounds.

In discussions between the presentations comparisons were made of the various religious institutions represented by the class members. In addition to the interdenominational differences which were reported, contrasts between churches located in the city and those in rural areas were noted. This opportunity was provided because a few of the class members lived outside of the urban area or were members of families who still maintain ties with churches in the countryside. The comparative analysis concerned the variables listed above (e. g. distinctions based upon age and sex, incorporation of new members, church specialists, etc.). The students identified similarities and differences among the various churches and asked many questions of each other about procedures and customs they did not understand.

In order to delve more deeply into the differences and similarities of the various religious institutions, five students responded to Mr. Simmons' request for volunteers to make special summary reports on the four Protestant denominations represented by the class members (Baptist, Methodist, Holiness, Christian) and the Catholic Church. These reports marked the end of the comparative study of local religious institutions. This study was the most complex research task the students engaged in during the term. Greater proficiency in observing and recording was needed than in other projects because of the breadth of the topic, the relative complexity of the social situation in a church service, and the length of time spent in collecting

data. The information collected by the pupils involved a great amount of detail; this coupled with the variety of churches under consideration made the process of comparative analysis more complicated than in earlier reports. Greater skill was needed to go beyond the concrete particulars of the data into ordering, classification, and analysis.

Due to intense student interest, the day in between the last regular church reports and the special summary reports was devoted to a general discussion of a Federal court decision handed down a few days earlier. This decision ordered the county school officials to implement their plans for complete desegregation by February 1, 1970, rather than the following September. Hence, Carver High School would be phased out in less than a month and the experimental class could not continue.

After the church reports were completed, the final written assignment was handed in and a student gave a special book report on Claude Brown's Manchild in the Promised Land. This book contains careful and detailed observations of the life styles and social groupings in Harlem. It also includes some of the folk history and traditions of the black people who migrated from the rural South to the urban centers of the Northeast. Finally, the nature of the changes which have occurred over time among the Harlem immigrants are investigated through an analysis of the differences in perspectives between the author and his parents. The pupil's report was detailed, comparative, and analytical; many statements contrasting Harlem and the local black community were included in the presentation.

At this point in time only the research project on the student walkout remained to be considered by the class. The students reported their observations concerning the order of events and provided descriptions of the action occurring within these events. Next, this concrete data was con-

sidered in light of the purposes of the walkout and the perspectives of the people who were affected by it. After this, the problems encountered by the students in carrying out their activities in the walkout and the consequences of this action were discussed. The second day the discussion was extended to encompass what was expected to occur when the students transferred to the other schools, whether or not it was wise to desegregate the schools in the middle of the year, and a reconsideration of the county's plan for desegregation.

These discussions marked the end of what was supposed to be the last week of school at Carver. However, during the week it was announced by school officials that the school would remain open for one more week. This additional week in the experimental class was devoted to general discussions of two controversial issues: birth control and drugs.

Plans For The Second Semester

Some broad tentative plans for the class activities during the second half of the year had already been made before it was known that Carver would be closed in February. These future activities were designed to give the pupils additional experience in observation, interviewing, and recording and to enable them to gain skill in analyzing and comparing group behavior.

One of the important kinds of activities which had been planned was a study of the student system at Carver High School. This would have been accomplished through collecting and analyzing data on the behavior of various student groups and would have involved a special emphasis on the senior class.

The other two major projects which had been planned involved going more deeply into what had already been done in the class. For those who had ac-

quired an interest in the church research, an opportunity would have been provided for further exploration in this area. Tape recorders would have been available to record the services for presentation and analysis in class. Secondly, opportunities for further research and development in the area of family history would have been provided. The students who were interested in this subject would also have been supplied with recording devices.

It was hoped that one of the end results of these last two projects would be documents of a kind that would be valuable in that they preserved certain aspects of the past in the black community including the sense of folk behavior in the family and the church. A broad objective of all three activities was of course the further development of research skills.

Summary and Implications

The experimental class was conducted so that the foci of activities were the pupils actively engaged in the processes of accumulating, organizing, classifying, analyzing, and reporting data. Books and lectures were very important in accomplishing the goals of the class, but they were subsidiary means; they were used to complement and give added meaning to the research projects.

The major emphasis of the subject matter and activities of the experimental class was comparative analysis between past and present and among various life styles. The investigation of the community in its past and present forms involved the pupils in assessing the meaning of the changes which have occurred over the past three generations. The data presented about other cultures encouraged the students to analyze differences in behavior patterns and social groupings cross-culturally.

The activities and content of the experimental class began with areas with which the students were already involved and interested; their families, their churches, their community, and their life style. These immediate concerns, however, were only a starting point from which to investigate broader problems and concepts. They provided the basis from which to explore the interconnections between present and past and to which life styles remote in time and space could be compared. Such comparisons afforded a means by which the pupils could begin to see their own place in the process of history and in the present world.

The subject matter, techniques, and activities of the class encouraged the pupils to view knowledge as tentative and changing rather than absolute and static. The information collected by the pupils through observing and interviewing involved people's perceptions of the world; as the data were presented in class conflicting views and ideas about the same events and happenings were apparent. Moreover, the subject matter and techniques utilized in carrying out class activities emphasized continous modification over time in basic life style and cultural institutions. Also, the information presented about other cultural groups encouraged the point of view that behavior patterns and values are relative and changing from one community to the next. Finally, the emphasis in the experimental class was on process rather than on some ultimate and fixed goals; it was attempted to build skills in order to enable the students to engage in continuous inquiry, not give "Truths" which would somehow endure to give infallible guidance later in life.

At the same time the pupils were gaining comparative cross-cultural

perspectives, a sense of history, and a feeling for the tentative nature of knowledge in today's world, they were acquiring skills in observing and recording. They were learning to classify and analyze raw information and were provided with opportunities to deal with truly open ended problems and questions. As they engaged in the process of going beyond concrete data into making generalizations through which new insights are gained, no predetermined answers or categories were externally imposed on their data. Instead, the taxonomy and conclusions arose out of the detailed information collected by the students in a socio-cultural millieu.

Since the pupils reported their data to the classroom group and engaged in interviewing, they were getting practice in social skills such as communicating effectively with others, talking in front of a group, eliciting information from others, and listening. In reporting activities they were faced with the necessity of presenting the data they had collected in a form which was interesting and intelligible to other students and the teachers. It was important in conducting interviews to do things which made the interviewee feel comfortable and relaxed so that he would talk freely. As one class member put it, the students were learning "to say the right thing at the right time," and "how to get people to talk to you."

The processes and perspectives taught in the experimental class can be adapted to any level of schooling and are applicable in a wide variety of subject fields. For example, the natural history method, with its emphasis upon careful observation and comparison of phenomena over time, can be used in the area of language-arts to examine such areas as the historical processes through which language develops and changes, the relationships between the language of a group and other aspects of its culture, language variations within a society, and the uses of language. Furthermore, the

methods and techniques used in the experimental class can serve as the major focus of educational activities, or they can be used to supplement more traditional types of instruction.

Today the schools are faced with the task of helping young people live and work in a world characterized by rapid technological and social changes, and they are constantly being bombarded with increasing amounts of new knowledge in every subject field. As educational institutions attempt to respond to the demands of modern life, shifts in the goals of schooling are taking place. There is of necessity a movement away from mere information passing on the part of the teacher and mastery of set bodies of knowledge by the pupils. More and more the focus has to be upon inquiry, problem solving, and acquiring frames of references necessary for continual analysis and evaluation of new knowledge. The method of natural history and the anthropological processes and perspectives included in this conceptual scheme provide useful tools to help the schools implement their new goals into successful programs. The utilization of these techniques and processes fosters the growth of the skills of inquiry, helps develop perspectives to interpret and analyze new experiences, and encourages scientific problem solving through an emphasis on revising hypotheses and solutions when changes in environmental conditions occur.

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